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AUTHOR Brantlinger, Ellen A.
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ABSTRACT

A social cognition approach is taken to study social class influences on schooling as reflected in the attitudes of 74 high school students. What happens in school is discussed from the perspectives of dominant and subordinate social classes. Narratives of the adolescents in this study confirm a number of propositions of critical theory pertaining to social class influences on schooling: (1) social class conflict is ubiquitous in schools; (2) school is not a neutral setting; (3) adolescents bring their social-class determined subjectivities to school; (4) social perceptions are shaped through school discourse; and (5) human thought is heteroglossic and dynamic. To intervene and disassemble the social class reproductive nature of schools it is necessary to review the basic assumptions underlying the view of schools as meritocracies. Educational reform must take into account the social inequities in schools as they are. Three figures and 18 tables illustrate the discussion. (Contains 357 references.) (SLD)

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